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The Branding Iron
J. GOODMAN

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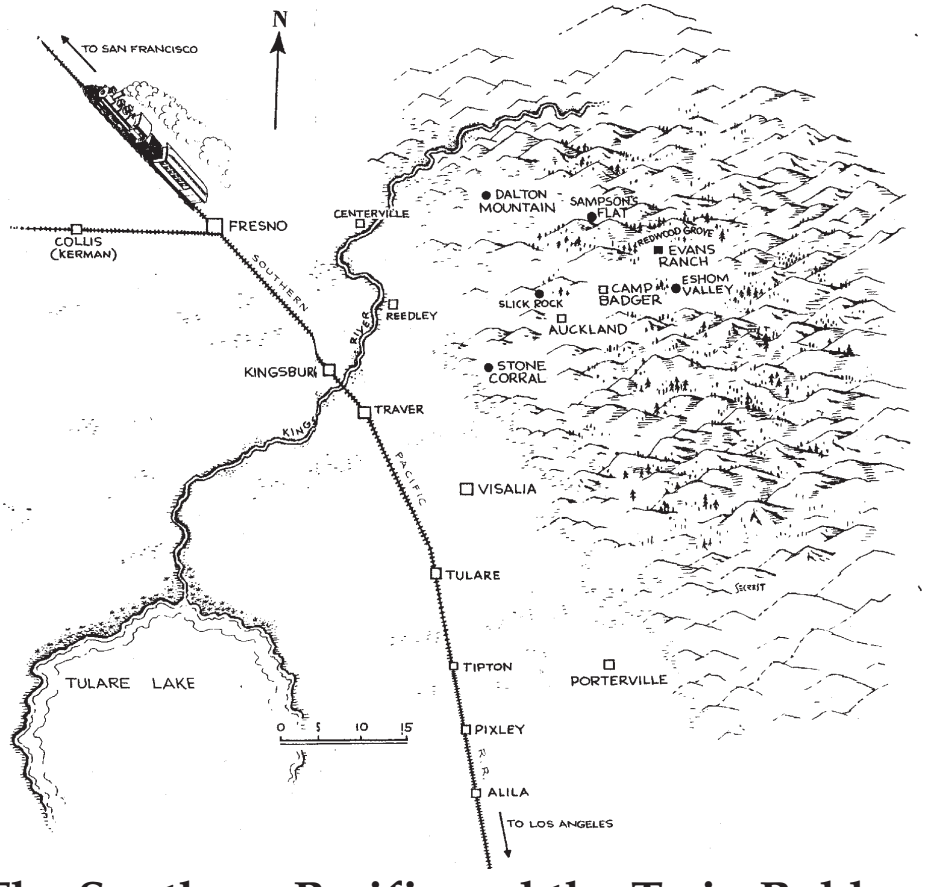

The Southern Pacific and the Train Robbers

by Nicholas C. Polos

After Mussel Slough the bitterness toward the Southern Pacific did not subside; indeed, it became more intense due to continued outrageous demands made by the railroad such as the long-short haul, an evil which cost the farmers much money and inconvenience.

Less than ten years after the bloody May morning, the Southern Pacific was hit with a string of five train robberies. These robberies occurred over a period of 42 months; all but one were in the vicinity of Mussel Slough, and each had a similar *modus operandi*. There were always two robbers, in spite of vague accounts of some accomplices, who stopped

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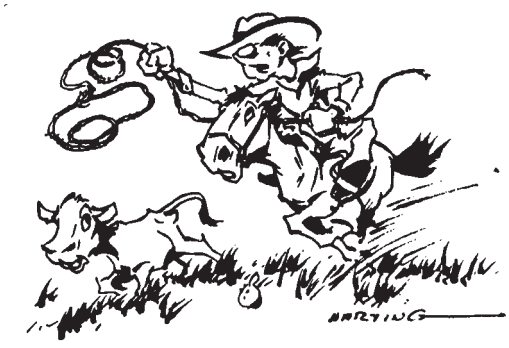

THE MONTHLY ROUNDUP

JULY 2001 MEETING

GORDON M. BAKKEN, professor of history, CSU, Fullerton, enlightened, entertained, and amused the Corral with examples of how the West has influenced the development of American law.

Photograph by Froy Tiscareño.

July Meeting Speaker Gordon M. Bakken

Bakken was born in Wisconsin and received his education at the University of Wisconsin including a PhD in history and a JD. He has taught at Fullerton since 1969, except for a semester as Visiting Assistant Professor of History at Wisconsin. His publications are voluminous and include *Practicing Law in Frontier California*, the editorship of the recent *Law in the Western United States*, and seven volumes co-author-

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the train, and their methods were always the same.

The first robbery occurred near Pixley early in the morning of February 22, 1889. Two masked men, who reached the locomotive cab by climbing over the tender, ordered engineer Peter Bolenger to stop Southern Pacific train #17. Using the engineer and fireman C. G. Elder as shields they moved to the express car. The express messenger J. R. Kelley complied with the order to open the door, and one robber entered the car while the other stood guard outside. Deputy Sheriff Ed Bently of Modesto, a passenger on the train, decided to find out why the train had stopped and hopped off on the side opposite the robbers. When he looked under the train, several shots were fired in his direction, wounding him in the arm and shoulder. After collecting their loot, the robbers marched the crew back to the cabin and disappeared into the morning fog. Conductor James Syminger, now aware of what happened, ordered the train back to Pixley where the robbery was announced via telegraph, and the train renewed its northward journey. The express companies and the railroad offered rewards of "$2,000 for the arrest and conviction of each robber, and special trains with officers, men and horses were immediately dispatched to form a formidable posse, but to no avail; the robbers disappeared in the early darkness."

The second robbery occurred at Goshen on January 24, 1890, when masked men assaulted Southern Pacific Train #19. This time the loot was supposed to be approximately $20,000. Unfortunately during the course of the robbery James Christensen, a tramp, was shot; he died on the way to Tulare.

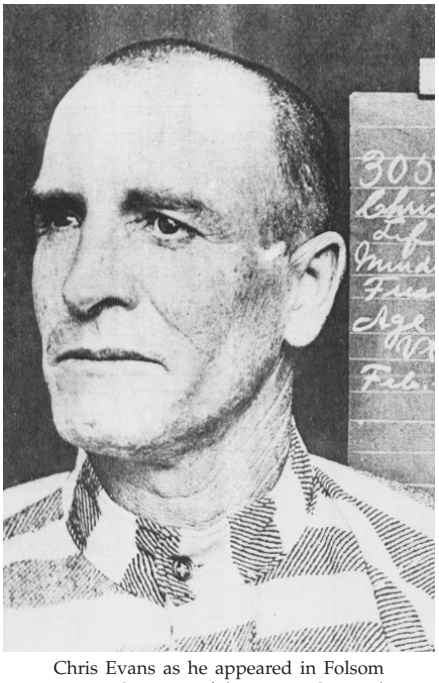
Months later on September 3, 1891, two armed and masked men attacked a train at Ceres, a small station near Stockton. However, this time the two express messengers, W. U. Reed and C. Charles, refused to open the safe, and the bandits blasted it open. The noise brought railroad detectives, Lon Harris and J. Lawson, on the run; after an exchange of shots the bandits stole away into the darkness leaving little by which to follow their trail. This was the only time that the bandits were thwarted in carrying out their plans.

Although the authorities had been considering the Dalton Gang, who were known to be in the area during the time of the robberies, as the possible culprits, at this time the authorities knew that Grattan Dalton was in their jail and brothers Bob and Emmett were in Oklahoma; it was not possible to blame them.

After a lull of almost eleven months, the bandits stopped the Southern Pacific southbound night express near Collis. They managed to escape with loot which included money and a sack of Peruvian coins. It was this robbery that lead to the downfall of the two culprits; albeit at this robbery three men were purported to be involved.

The morning after the fifth robbery the townspeople of Visalia were talking about the recent events. Bad news travels fast, and to some of the citizens robbing the Southern Pacific was poetic justice. There was in the San Joaquin Valley a conspiracy of silence worthy of Sicily itself. Even as the search for the train robbers intensified and the railroad increased its rewards, the officers still came up empty handed, but not for long.

The railroad threw its best men into the search for the bandits. After the Collis robbery, John Sontag and Chris Evans, two locals, came under serious suspicion. They became suspect when George Sontag, John's brother, went about Visalia, a short time after the robbery, bragging that he had been a passenger on that train and described the robbery in exacting detail. The detectives decided to detain and question George Sontag who told them conflicting stories. In trying to trace the getaway vehicle, the detectives had discovered that the day before the train hold-up John Sontag had hired a buggy of the same description in Visalia and returned it right after the robbery. His friend, Christopher Evans, whom the authorities had been watching, had not been in Visalia the night of the robbery. Although the evidence was circumstantial, they decided to



Chris Evans as he appeared in Folsom Prison. Courtesy of the Fresno City and County Historical Society, and Adrienne McGraw's Office.

delve more deeply into John Sontag and Evans at whose house George had been detained.

Christopher Evans, the leader and star of this ill-fated triumvirate, was an unusual man and not the typical criminal type. According to author Stephen Fox:

> *Evans was 45 years old in 1892. Picture him on the verge of notoriety, 5 feet 8 and about 175 pounds, with brown hair, hazel eyes, a reddish beard and an alert fidgety manner. He walked fast, springy in both knees, and could easily cover 45 miles a day. Talking in his sharp squeaky voice, he smiled easily and wagged his head.*

A local newspaper editor observed that Evans loved poetry and would often recite Tennyson's "Locksley Hall," while walking the baby at night. Evans was familiar with the works of Shakespeare, Scott, Swinburne, and even Darwin, Huxley, and Spencer. He had a large family of seven children whom he adored; especially the oldest daughter, Eva, a lively sixteen-year old. His wife Molly adored her husband, and in an interview with the reporters of the San Francisco *Examiner* she said: "I tell you there never was a more hard working man... I was married to him when I was barely sixteen. I was born in Jackson, Amador County, and he was a Canadian, born in Ottawa. We lived for several years on a mountain ranch. After that at Farmersville, and then here." The family had lived for a time in Modesto and then returned to the little house in Visalia. The Evans family lived in Adelaide in 1878 to 1882 and had never been near the Mussel Slough area. Evans was highly regarded by his neighbors, and the Visalia *Daily Times* observed:

> *It is said that Chris Evans is used to the smell of gun powder. He served in the Civil War when a mere boy, and was wounded in the foot at the battle of Winchester. He also served against the Indians after the War, and was under Major Reno at the time Gen. Custer was killed. He says he heard the firing at the time of the Custer massacre.*

Evans came west in search of riches and a new life, but from the beginning his luck seemed to have run out. His first venture in the San Joaquin Valley failed because he lost his land to the railroad due to a faulty title. This setback was followed by one bad venture after the other which resulted in a deep bitterness toward the Southern Pacific which he saw as "the sole cause of his troubles." He raised twenty acres of beans, but the SP raised its shipping rates at harvest, and he lost money. He worked in the grain warehouses where people told him more horror stories about the big, bad railroad. He had already lost money trying to operate a livery stable in Modesto, but the stable caught fire and was a complete loss. It was then the Evanses moved back to Visalia and tried farming. By this time he had become a bitter man and was almost destitute.

He met John Sontag in 1887 and quickly found out that they had one thing in common—a hatred of the Southern Pacific. Evans was more than ready to sympathize with Sontag. Sontag, 33 years old, was born on a farm in Mankato, Minnesota, and his

life had been one of constant hardships and disappointments like that of Evans. He was born John Constant, but his father died very soon after the birth of his brother George; when their mother remarried, the two lads took the step-father's name. He came to California and worked for a time as a brakeman on the SP where he was injured and his foot crushed. The railroad treated Sontag badly, giving him little medical treatment and no job security; he felt he had just cause to hate the SP. When Evans and Sontag compared notes they found good reasons to become loyal partners, and both were publicly outspoken around Visalia regarding their feelings toward to railroad.

George Sontag, John's younger brother and unsavory partner in the hectic career of crime and flight of Evans and Sontag, did not take long to jeopardize the safety of both men. The railroad detectives were very active in tracking George's past history. They found he had served two years in the Nebraska State Penitentiary for embezzlement. Also, evidence confirmed that he was not in St. Louis, as he claimed, on the morning preceding the train robbery and was not on the southbound train from St. Louis at the time of the Collis robbery. Most of his life George Sontag was engaged in illicit activities and lived on the shady side of the law. In short, he was a bad actor—robber, perjurer, and traitor by his own confession, schemer and murderer according to the later records of the California State Prison at Folsom.

George was in Visalia bragging how he had witnessed the Collis holdup, and Southern Pacific detective William Smith intuitively decided to go to the Evans house and check it out. There he met George and took him to the sheriff's office to check the details of the robbery. George's account was so contradictory that the authorities decided to detain him. While this was going on, Detective Smith and Deputy Sheriff Al Witty decided to return to the Evans house. When they got there, they entered the front room uninvited and were at once challenged by the daughter, Eva.

What happened next is open to conjecture and accounts vary. Eva, not knowing that the two officers had seen John Sontag walk in the back door, said that Sontag was not there. Eva ran to tell Evans that one of the visitors had called her a liar, and he hastened into the house. Here the events become cloudy because Smith pulled the back curtain aside, and there was Sontag with a shotgun in his hand! Evans covered both officers with his revolver. Both officers bolted for the front door; Sontag and Evans fired, wounding both Smith and Witty. The two outlaws fled at once in the lawmen's rig—then they did the unexpected a few miles out of town they headed back to the house to get supplies and equipment. In the meantime, the officers had fled back to town to get reinforcements.

John Sontag, the youthful partner of Chris Evans, before the Stone Canyon shoot-out. Courtesy of the Fresno City and County Historical Society and Adrienne McGraw's Office.

After the lawmen fled and the "partners-in-crime" Evans and Sontag returned to the house under the cover of darkness in search of food, blankets, ammo, and supplies. Sheriff Ben Overell on a hunch managed to convince Constable C. J. Hall and Deputy Oscar Beaver to take a run out to the Evans house while the other posses were searching

the outskirts of town. The Sheriff's party reached the house just as the two outlaws were loading the wagon after having had supper. The trio tried to surround the house and thus set the stage for the second battle in less than twenty-four hours. They tried to close in on the two outlaws, and Deputy Beaver, being a bit eager, fired toward the barn, giving his position away; in the return fire, he was mortally wounded. Another posse arrived during the firing and were met by Constable Hall who explained the situation. By then dawn was breaking and a heavy silence had settle over the house and grounds. The officers closed in and found the area deserted—Evans and Sontag had given them the slip. They searched the area thoroughly and found the Peruvian coins from the Collis holdup buried in the garden. This provided solid evidence against the two "prodigal sons." A short time later, Deputy Beaver died as a result of his wounds. He was the first man killed in the "desperate flight of the two robbers." Now the hunt was on in earnest. Although trailed by posses, Evans and Sontag were often given shelter and food by many of the settlers who hated the railroad more than they hated crime. During this period they were often interviewed by reporters of several San Francisco newspapers which printed what Evans and Sontag had to say but never disclosed exactly where the bandits were to be found.

By this time the lawmen realized that "Chris Evans was a remarkable man." James B. Hume, the famous Wells Fargo detective, stated, "He [Evans] may always be expected to do the unexpected. That is what makes him dangerous." Evans did have some help from the ranchers and farmers, and every so often his daughter, Eva, would throw a saddle on a fast horse and ride out of town to visit him and Sontag.

It would be almost impossible to trace the tracks of "the prodigal sons." They knew the mountains and were skilled woodsmen and hunters. Their biggest problem was one of logistics, and even Eva could not help them very much in this respect. The outlaws had fled to Trevor where, under the cover of darkness, they slipped into Harrison Reacock's livery stable and fed their horses. In the meantime, George Sontag had been sentenced to life imprisonment for his role in the Collis train robbery. The posses, fired up by the killing of Deputy Beaver and the huge reward ($10,000) offered by the railroad, were hot on the trail of the two bandits. The posses were headed by Deputy Marshal Vernon Wilson and Deputy Sheriff Andy McGinnis. They knew that Evans had a small mining claim near Simpson's Flat, a wild area with few settlers.

There they came on Jim Young's cabin. As they approached the cabin, which was located at the bottom of a basin in a heavily wooded area, they saw a man carrying a bucket toward the water pump. Apparently, the fugitives had found it earlier in the day and had breakfast there before they saw the posse approaching in the open area. When the officers neared the cabin, Evans and Sontag opened fire, wounding Deputy Witty and killing Wilson and McGinnis. The posse retreated, and in the furor and excitement of the battle the outlaws again made their escape into the wilderness.

When winter came, the hunt for the two fugitives ceased. The high Sierra is a rough area to search for anyone in the winter time. Evans and Sontag found a very inaccessible hiding place behind a waterfall where they dug a deep cave 12 feet long and eight feet wide barricaded by large and heavy rocks. It was a fortress which few cared to challenge and besides heavy snows blocked the few roads. The outlaws were now confident that for the time they were safe. As the winter wore on, the two fugitives often emerged from the cave and visited friends for hot food and socialization. They more or less came and went as they pleased, and since Eva no longer came to visit the outlaws, they even dared to return to Visalia to visit with the family at Christmas.

When spring came, the posse renewed the hunt for the two. The newspapers began to pick up the saga of the fugitives, and bounty hunters returned to the area. However, public opinion began to change.

Vic Wilson and Andy McGinnis
Two of Evans and Sontag's victims. Sketches from the San Francisco *Chronicle*, June 1893.

By this time the valley inhabitants were angry with the successful defiance of the constituted authority by the lawless pair. In the recent past, they were heroes to the lumberjacks, and Evans knew many of the settlers in the mountains, who were also angry with the Southern Pacific and who gave willing assistance, but time was running out for the elusive outlaws. As a rule Westerners did not ask questions of one another as long as personal rights were respected. They had a habit of feeling sorry for the underdog; however, the settlers around Visalia were tired of the unfavorable publicity that Evans and Sontag had created.

Also, the saga of Evans and Sontag had become a scandal in California; so much so that the United States Marshal George E. Gard came to Visalia to form a special posse to track down the bandits. The Marshal's posse was large and included Hiram Lee Rapelje, a capable deputy from Fresno, Fred Jackson, an officer from Nevada, Tom Burns, and several other well known officers. The posse found a vacant cabin known as the Widow Baker's place six miles west of Wilcox Canyon and decided to camp there. The cabin lay in a little cup in the hills on a grassy plain free of any trees or cover. The posse recalled the previous shoot-outs in Visalia and and at Young's cabin; this time they were careful in approaching the cabin. Before the posse started out, detective John Thacker met with the U.S. Marshal and Fresno county Sheriff Jay Scott and devised a plan to capture the fugitives. Keeping out of sight, the posse constantly surveyed the trails known to be frequented by the two. Hiram Rapelje admitted that the posse had no intention to take the fugitives alive; they had not forgotten the fatal shooting of McGinnis and Wilson. Unfortunately, a wagon, driven by William W. Ward, of Kingburg, and Lewis Draper, carrying the body of George Bayer, a cowboy who had died, stumbled into the vicinity of the cabin at Stone Canyon. Evans saw the wagon and fired three shots at it. The horses bolted and fled down the valley at a rate of speed not customary in the transportation of cadavers.

It quickly became obvious to the fugitives that they were surrounded, and they became desperate. Evans spotted the posse and took cover behind a large pile of straw while returning the posse's fire. The posse surrounded the area, firing began, and the battle raged most of the night. Hume had pointed out that Evans was unpredictable, but the posse learned that he was also both courageous and daring.

When dawn broke the posse cautiously closed in on the haystack where they found

Molly Evans, Chris Evans' wife. Sketch from San Franciso *Chronicle*, June 1893.

Sontag badly wounded, but Evans was gone. Later it turned out Evans had been shot in both arms and one eye was gone, but he managed in the dark to stagger six miles through wilderness, bleeding badly, to the Perkins Ranch. Mrs. Perkins' daughter had married Perry Byrd, a brother of Evans' wife. Here Evans found refuge and relief hiding out in the attic. Somehow word was sent to the posse, and he was captured by William Hall, under Sheriff of Tulare County, and taken to Visalia for medical treatment. Some writers claim that Perry Byrd, looking for the reward, gave Evans away; other observers claim that the posse easily picked up Evans' bloody trail. In the Visalia jail John Sontag died of lockjaw. The doctor dressed Evans' wounds and amputated his left arm three inches above the wrist. What followed next was an unexpected turn of events.

The Evans family was a poor but proud one. Eva was a girl of great courage and common sense who adored her father; so when R. C. White, a San Francisco playwright, invited Eva and Molly to portray themselves in a quickly written melodrama entitled "The Collis Train Robbery," Eva quickly accepted. White agreed the family would receive 25% of the play's profits.

The best description of the play is given by S. Fox, who described Wiley Smooth, "the mustached villain," as a "slimy caricature of Will Smith, the maligned SP detective." The play, retitled "Evans and Sontag, or the Visalia Bandits," played to the crowd's prejudices, and opening night at the National Theater in San Francisco was a smash hit, probably because it reflected public and popular opinion about the case. Eva performed very well and received good notices. When she spurned the advances of "Wiley Smooth," the "winsome blonde" emotionally declares:

> *I have imbibed a hatred for the blood-sucking corporation that destroyed the homes and happiness of the people at Mussel Slough and I have imbibed a loathing for you and the rest of the sneaking detectives who are ready to commit any crime at the dictation of your masters.*

This brought a tremendous applause from a packed house. Tableaus of family bliss and scenes especially written to focus on revenge for Mussel Slough were wildly applauded. The San Francisco newspapers praised Eva and Molly's performance. The proceeds were used to provide legal aid for Chris Evans. On the road the play ran in Sacramento, Stockton, and Fresno to large crowds, but not in Visalia or Hanford. The Fresno *Daily Republican* commented:

> *Notwithstanding the admonition to parents from press and pulpit boys flocked to the Barton last night in droves to see and hear the Evans and Sontag drama...parquet, balcony, and gallery were packed. It may be truthfully said that the night was one of unexampled success for outlaws and the management.*

Evans slowly recovered from his wounds, and his trial began at Fresno on November 20, 1893. The presiding judge was M. K. Harris. Evans had fine legal counsel provided by the funds earned by Eva and Molly's theatrical adventures.

Throughout the entire trial for the murder of Vic Wilson, Evans spent the time reading law books and chatting. He kept a nonchalant attitude throughout the entire trial ex-

cept when George Sontag, now a witness for the prosecution, testified. George claimed that he knew all about the train robberies; surprisingly the authorities believed him and welcomed his cooperation. George, on crutches since he had been wounded in a foolish and bold attempt to escape from Folsom (partly engineered by Eva Evans), swore that he and his dead brother, John, and Evans had committed the Collis train robbery. Apparently the jury believed him. The strange thing about the trial was that most of the evidence was circumstantial and was not even challenged at any time during the trial. The defense claimed that Evans was merely defending himself against the posses and certain death. Eventually he was convicted of first-degree murder; instead of being ordered executed, he was sentenced to life in the Folsom state prison. The trial ended on December 14, 1893, and Evans spent several weeks in the Fresno jail working on his memoirs while waiting transfer to Folsom prison.

In the meantime, Eva Evans, always the conspiratorial daughter, had gone to Fresno where she met and captivated Ed Morrell, a young waiter who carried meals to Evans at the jail. The story of Evans' resulting escape reads like a classic Hoot Gibson western! The officers of Fresno were out of town checking into a rumor that there was to be a train robbery near Porterville. This clever ruse cleared the way for Morrell to smuggle two loaded revolvers into the jail paving the way for Evans' escape. As Eva, Evans, and Morrell fled down Mariposa Street, they ran into the ex-mayor of Fresno, and when they got to "O" Street, where a team of horses was tied to aid in the escape, they encountered John D. Morgan, Fresno's Chief of Police, and W. M. Wyatt. Evans fired at Morgan causing the escape team to spook and run away. Evans and Morrell tore down a dark alley until they reached Mono and Q Streets where they confiscated a newsboy's horse and Petalume cart and fled toward Sanger and then into the mountains. In spite of the efforts of Sheriff Jay Scott and his posse who combed the area in rain, snow, and sleet, no trace of the outlaws was found. Naturally, the newspapers had a field day with these events. The two outlaws were purported to have gone to South America. Or as the rumor had it, the two outlaws were hiding in Honduras. Most of the Valley residents who knew the two men did not believe the newspaper stories. As Hu Maxwell in his classic study of Evans and Sontag pointed out:

Eva Evans, Chris Evans' daughter. Sketch from San Franciso *Chronicle*, June 1893.

> *One of the puzzling aspects of the story of Evans and Sontag is the protection given them by willing and unwilling people ... The people in the mountains gave the men food, shelter, and information—some because the were friends, some because they had to do it. Their protection is the leitmotiv of the story.*

Maxwell contends that at no time were Evans or Sontag more than fifty miles from Visalia and often floated in and out of the Visalia homestead. As time went by the posted rewards exceeded $10,000 which attracted state-wide interest, especially from the newspapers.

The Southern Pacific and Wells Fargo gave the responsibility of tracing Chris Evans and Edward Morrell during that cold and wet winter to Jay Scott, the Fresno Sheriff now in bad light due to the escape, and four deputies, Redford, Timmons, Peck and White.

For several weeks Scott and his posse trudged aimlessly through snow and storms trying to track down each rumor in pursuit of the two who seemed to have disappeared into the hill country. A dozen posses were formed in Fresno and sent by train and horseback to strategic points; the newspapers used all means to keep the story alive. C.T. Bigelow, of the San Francisco newspapers, sent the following from Simpson's Flat, January 27, 1894: "The men have lived well in the mountains. Everyone is willing to feed them." It seems obvious that the newspaper reporters had no trouble finding the outlaws and talk with them which caused another reaction of strong public feeling against Sheriff Scott.

Eva added to the confusion. She told the newspapers: "I don't know where papa is, but I suspect that he has left the country. We haven't very much money left, although we have a very fine ranch. There are seven children and we will have to depend largely upon what we get from the play." Eva was not only a good actress, she was also an astute business woman.

Evans was very much devoted to his family of seven children, so after several months into the second manhunt Evans tired of a fugitive life. He received word that one of his children was sick; he and Morrell sneaked back to his home in Visalia. Now begins a very complex plot. Many different sources have various diverse descriptions of how the two outlaws were captured. Richard Dillon claims that "after George Sontag's confession that public opinion shifted in favor of the embattled outlaws," and only the Visalia *Daily Times*, Evans' home town newspaper, "excoriated the heartless murderers."

While many knew Evans as an upright citizen, they also knew that Evans and Sontag had violated the Seventh Commandment: "Thou shall not steal." When the news got out that the authorities had found out that the outlaws were in the Visalia house, a mob quickly formed. Tulare Sheriff E. W. Kay, with the aid of U.S. Marshal Gird of Los Angeles, carefully planned the capture of the two outlaws. He positioned heavily armed men around the house and had a young lad, Walter A. Beason, take a "surrender note" to Evans inside the house. There followed a series of note exchanges. The note by Evans read:

To Sheriff E. W. Kay: Dear Sir:
Send the crowd away and bring Hall to the gate, and then we will talk.
C. Evans

An unfriendly crowd had gathered and the Sheriff was getting very uneasy; he quickly sent this note which Evans accepted. The note read:

To C. Evans:
Surrender now without being hurt. If you give up to me I will protect you, and let the law take its course. I will disburse [sic] this mob if you say and meet you.

Because the Sheriff had a high regard for the resourcefulness of Evans and also was a bit uneasy about the possibility of the mob's incendiary nature, he and his posse under the cover of darkness spirited the outlaws to Fresno. There in the custody of Hi Rapelje, Sheriff Scott, L.P. Timmons, and Henry Scott the prisoners were taken by train to Folsom State Prison, which had been opened in 1880 to house offenders serving long terms, as well as incorrigible and repeat offenders. Morrell was sentenced to life imprisonment and sent to Folsom with his hero and idol, Chris Evans.

At Folsom, Evans, prisoner #3055, was a model prisoner. He served his sentence working the Folsom library while writing a novel, *Euasia*, which was published in 1914. This was an utopian novel that incorporated many of the ideas about society Evans felt were important. In early May 1901 Evans applied for parole but was turned down. The Fresno *Weekly Democrat* while concluding that Evans had been a model prisoner said: "He now holds a position of trust in the drug department of the prison ... Evan's wife is living in Visalia where she works in the packing houses and takes in washing." In the years that followed, Eva again began obtaining signatures for his release, but this effort too failed. Evans served seventeen

years in Folsom. When Hiram Johnson, a long time foe of the Southern Pacific Railroad, was elected Governor, he pardoned Evans. By this time Evans had a touch of palsy, his left arm was gone, as was his right eye. Governor Johnson observed:

> *I am not clear that I pardoned Chris Evans. I was rather under the impression that I obtained his parole from the prison directors and that one of the special reasons for doing so was his physical condition.*

Ed Morrell served nine years in Folsom; after his release, he devoted himself to prison reform and writing a book, *The Twenty-Fifth Man*. The book was sponsored by the American Crusaders, an interest group which supported new ideas in penology.

On May 1, 1911, Evans walked out the gate of Folsom Prison. He was more or less like a modern Rip van Winkle. His daughter Eva, now Mrs. Winifred Burrell, met him at the gate and took the aged bandit in her automobile to Sacramento. For six years he lived in quiet retirement surrounded by his loving family in Portland, Oregon, where he died in 1917. His family always believed he was innocent. Love is a many splendored thing!

The reviews of his death showed mixed feelings. To some citizens Evans was a Robin Hood, to others an "unmitigated villain." The Fresno *Expositor* called him "a gallant and picturesque bandit." Even to the very end Evans was defensive about his role as a bandit for he said: "I am not innocent of any wrong doing, for if I had not violated the Law I would not be in prison, but they were errors of the head, not of the heart." He had one satisfaction in that he had out lived most of his enemies. W. P. Skyhawk, in his poem on Evans' hideout cave, concludes: "There's a lone pine softly calling - For the hero that is dead."

SUGGESTED READINGS

Bean, Walton and James Rawls. *California: An Interpretative History*.

Brown, James L. *The Story of Kings County. The Mussel Slough Tragedy.*

Dillon, Richard H. *Wells Fargo Detective: The Biography of James B. Hume.*

Fox, Stephen. "Chris Evans Could Always be Relied on to Pull a Fast One," *Smithsonian*, (May 1995).

Lewis, Oscar. *The Big Four: The Story of Huntington, Stanford, Hopkins, and Crocker, and the Building of the Central Pacific Railroad.*

Maxwell, Hu. *Evans and Sontag: The Famous Outlaws of California.*

Small, Kathleen. *The History of Tulane County.*

Smith, Wallace. *Garden in the Sun.*

A View Of Southern California Viticulture

by Don P. Mullally

Despite the importance of wine in California, its full story has never been written. A book could be written solely about the grape in southern California, the region where the state's viticulture began. It would involve the missions, land grants, ranchos, land development and use, urbanization and suburbia, creation of income and wealth, and diseases of the vine. It would also involve human interest. For instance, during the 1850s, the Charles Kohler and John Frohling Co. made and stored wines in the basement of the old Los Angeles City Hall. Enticing aromas wafted upwards through the building feeding the senses and appetites of all present. Visiting a council meeting was a pleasing and memorable occasion.

The missions made the state's first wines (late 1790-1800). Production continued until secularization. The only variety of grape to be grown was the Mission, a coarse but robust Mediterranean variety which at best yielded only mediocre wine but somewhat better brandy.

The San Gabriel Mission provided cuttings for private vineyards. Through example, cuttings, and information, this mission was the "mother" of the wine industry near Los Angeles and perhaps the entire state. San Fernando Mission was renowned for the superior quality of its brandy. Following its closure, Andres Pico proudly took care of the vines and made spirits for visitors and jovial parties.

From 1815 to 1840, small, privately owned vineyards arose in the area. The vines provided family and friends with fresh fruit, wine, and brandy. Most of the larger ranchos had vines and made wine and brandy for themselves. After 1825, a few small commercial wineries began selling wines and brandy in the local area. The above wine making operations used cattle hides, pottery, clay vats, naked feet (usually Indian) for grape crushing, and so on—very primitive operations; nor were the wines aged.

In Los Angeles from the late 1830s to the mid 1850s, Jean Luis Vignes and William Wolfskill began making superior wines. They made and used oak barrels for aging, storing, and transporting wines. Vignes, an immigrant vintner from France, pioneered the local use of French wine making techniques. Both apparently grew several European varieties of grapes as well as Mission grapes. Perhaps Wolfskill obtained his cuttings from Vignes who was friendly, gregarious, helpful, and willingly shared his technology with progressive wine makers of Los Angeles and other areas.

By 1840 grapevines were flourishing along the borders of the Los Angeles River and all important water ditches. By this year, wine making was the most important industry in the Los Angeles area. Patchworks of vineyards and orchards extended as far as six miles from the city. Eventually, most big landowners grew grapes which they sold to the wineries. In 1863, there were 205 grape vines for each resident in the county.

Los Angeles had a flourishing wine industry at least a decade before the Gold Rush. Thus it was in a position to satisfy the early needs for wine, brandy, and fresh grapes. During the early years of the Gold Rush (1848-1858), nearly all domestic wine consumed in California was made in southern California. Until 1870, more wine was produced in southern than northern California.

Initially, the largest Los Angeles vineyards and wineries were owned by William Wolfskill, Jean Luis Vignes, and Don Manuel Requeña. By the late 1850s, the major producers were Charles Kohler and John Frohling, the Sansevain brothers, M. Kellar, Benjamin D. Wilson, and Benjamin Dreyfus. Wilson's vineyards were located in what is now Pasadena, San Marino, and Alhambra; his brandy distillery was at the location of

the Huntington Art Gallery and Library. Other large vineyards were those of John Rowland, William Workman, and Antonio Coronel. Wines must have also derived from wineries in Cucamonga, which date back to 1839. By 1860, J.J. Rose came into prominence making wine in the San Gabriel Valley. In 1861 several local wineries began shipping wines to New York and Boston. The German wine making colony in Anaheim was well established by this time. It was given marketing and leadership by the Kohler-Frohling Co. and B. Dreyfus. Most of the large vineyards and wineries of the 1850s increased production during the 1860s.

During the late 1860s, many other major growers joined the ranks of the above. In 1866, the Los Angeles Grape Growers and Wine Makers Society was founded, and in 1868, the Los Angeles Wine Growers Association was established. By 1867, Los Angeles (including Anaheim) had 36 distilleries for making brandy. There was more profit in brandy and demand was great. Inebriation and violence became all too common. Los Angeles was a rough town during those years.

Production of wine and brandy continued to increase during the 1870s. Major new wine growers and makers included General George Stoneman (Pasadena), Elias "Lucky" Baldwin (Santa Anita), J. De Barth Shorb and D. B. Wilson (Lake Vineyard Wine Co.), and Krank (Fair Oaks). Many major vineyards were also being planted in the San Gabriel Valley and other areas around Los Angeles. During 1880, Los Angeles County achieved maximum production of wine and brandy and possessed its greatest numbers of vines.

Due to superior grape growing climates, soils, and excellent European varietals of grapes, the table wines of northern California were finally recognized as being generally superior to those of the South. Popular demand shifted to northern table wine, and after, 1880 the wines makers of the south began to concentrate on making sweet wines such as port, muscatel, and sherry, which have high alcohol content. Hot climates favor fortified wines.

Pierce's disease, a new bacterial disease of grapevines, was particularly destructive to vineyards in southern California. In the mid-1880s, it diminished grape and vine production. The German colony of wine makers in Anaheim was wiped out. Citrus orchards replaced many vineyards. From 1884 to 1900, waves of subdivisions and urban improvements began removing land from agriculture including viticulture.

Caught between Pierce's disease, land sales, and subdivision, the wine industry began to change and decline during the 1880s. The pioneer wine makers were also aging or dead. By 1888, Rose, Kellar, and Kolhler were not listed in the Los Angeles Business Directory. But Baldwin and Shorb continued to have some success in the San Gabriel Valley, and the wine industry was growing in Cucamonga. Many new wineries appeared in the Los Angles Business Directory from the 1890s right up to Prohibition. Most of these were small, shoe string operations; many did not last more than one to three years.

However, the demand for all classes of wines continued to increase up to World War I. The increase was the result of a growing population and a steady rise in immigration from Europe, particularly southern Europe. In this part of Europe, wine was the preferred alcoholic drink. Secondo Guasti, an Italian, perceived opportunity and in 1905 formed the Italian Vineyard Co., in Cucamonga. The vineyard (5,000 acres) was at that time the largest in the world. It existed from 1905 until well after Prohibition. Guasti became wealthy and ate off gold plates.

By the 1890s, the Prohibitionists were already a strong force. The movement grew in time, and by 1914 the sales of alcoholic beverages declined. In 1921, approval of the Federal Prohibition Law of 1918 by the Supreme Court of the United States put an end to most wineries. Some wineries, i.e. Guasti survived Prohibition by raising and selling grapes, making grape jelly, and making medicinal wines and wine-based medicines. The most fortunate sold wine to the

Catholic Church for the Holy Sacrament services.

The largest and most successful of the 1895-1916 vineyards and wineries of the greater Los Angeles area were in the San Fernando, San Gabriel, and San Bernardino Valleys. Most of the major wineries were in Cucamonga. Among them were the Italian Vineyard Co. (1905-1930s), Garrett Wine Co. (1912-1940s), Brookside Wine Co., and the Cucamonga Company. The last operated under many names and was started by a San Francisco company whose leaders included B. Dreyfus, of Anaheim fame, and Isaias Hellman, an important banker. The recently obliterated Thomas Winery was the last of the groups.

The IVC's winery remains located in the little private town of Guasti which was founded by Secondo Guasti. The remains of the fire-gutted Garrett Winery remains in Ontario but has been converted to retail stores. Both companies survived Prohibition but soon after closed their doors. The politician-developer combination saw to the destruction and urban development of all the Cucamonga vineyards. The people who now live there have little connection to this part of their heritage and history and have lost much open space. The same can be said for Pasadena, the San Gabriel Valley, Santa Ana, and Los Angeles.

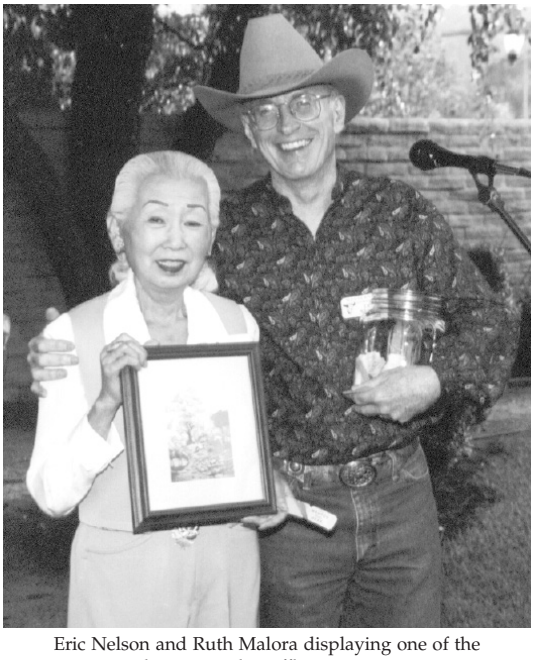
Photograph by Froy Tiscareño

Tremolocos preforming for the Corral.

Fandango 2001

On a beautiful June day, members of the corral convened at the Campo de Cahuenga for the annual Fandango. The Campo is the site where *Californio* forces under the command of Andrés Pico capitulated to Lt. Col. John C. Frémont ending the native population's uprising against United States forces after their takeover in the War with Mexico. Although the structure on the grounds, left after the Metropolitan Transportation Authority takeover, is not the location of the capitulation signing, it is a museum dedicated to the event.

The members spent a very pleasant afternoon talking to old friends, meeting new members, boning up on their California history, and listening to the music of Tremolocos. The highlight of the afternoon was the raffle for the Andy Dagasta paintings. Ruth Malora as first winner selected

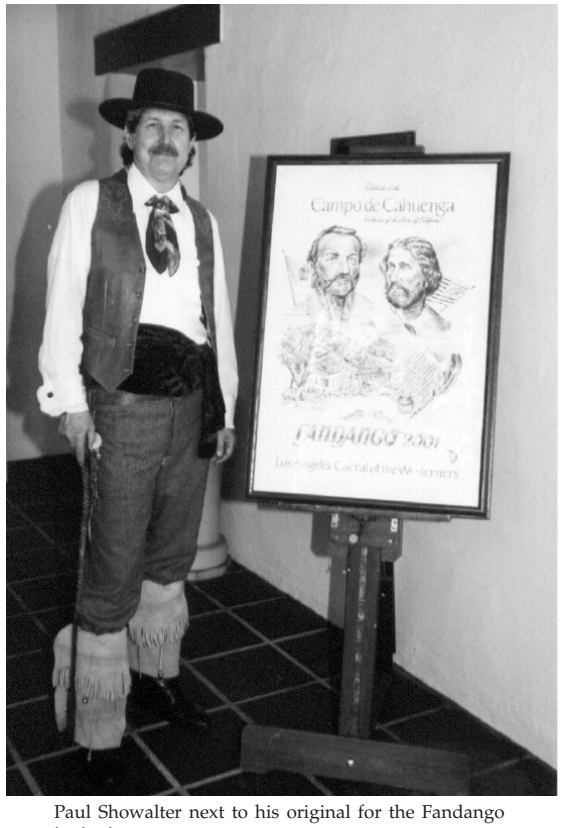


Photograph by Froy Tiscareño

Eric Nelson and Ruth Malora displaying one of the paintings she won in the raffle.

the four miniatures leaving the larger painting to be selected by the second winner, Mike Gallucci. At the auction Ranee Nelson outbid all others to acquire the Andy Dagasta watercolor of Campo de Cahuenga, and Gary Turner acquired the Paul Showalter watercolor poster for Fandango 2001.

Wrangler boss Ken Pauley expresses his thanks for the many who assisted. Pat Gallucci and Vickie Turner created the name place cards and greeted the guests. Mary Gormly decorated the fountain and was ably assisted by Bill and Jeanette Davis, Christine and Lou Bourdet, and Sandy and Albert Greenstein with the table decorations. Paul and Natalie Spitzzeri, Joe and Sherry Cavallo, Sandy and Albert Greenstein, Bill and Jeanette Davis, and even guests, Steve



Photograph by Froy Tiscareño

Paul Showalter next to his original for the Fandango invitation.

and Ranee Nelson, efficiently handled the set up and clean up. Special thanks go our great bar team, Glenda and Dick Taylor. They have been instructed to come back from Idaho every year to do their bar duties. All others who contributed to the administration and smooth function of the event are warmly thanked. Special thanks go to Andy Dagasta and Paul Showalter for donating the art for the raffle and auction, and also to our own auctioneer, Hugh Tolford.

As always, the wrangler next year will have a difficult task to top this year's Fandango.

(Monthly Roundup Ccontinued from page 2))
ed with Brenda Farrington. He has published 39 articles, a recent one in Keepsake 32.

The West has influenced American laws in a wide variety of ways. Most are acquainted with its influence in hard rock mining, but it has influenced a wide variety of areas.

One way we have been influenced is by Texas, the only place the "unwritten law" was written. Although a jury decided the law did not give a wronged husband the right to kill his wife at a later date.

A Montana court held that under "open range" an owner is not responsible for where his stock roams. If you hit a cow that has roamed onto the highway, you have no recourse.

Nevada is responsible for clarifying our right to travel. In 1864, Nevada leveled a poll tax on anyone traveling to California. The Supreme Court struck the tax down.

California helped strengthen due process. In a gold camp, the vigilantes were about to hang a man; the sheriff stopped them by insisting they follow due process. The vigilantes gave the man a fair trial and then hanged him.

Of course, California helped make more of a mess out of water law by introducing Pueblo waters rights which gave Los Angeles the claim to all the water in the area.

The "3-Strike Law" has a long history in the West. Oklahoma passed a law providing a rather unusual punishment for anyone convicted of a third felony. The Supreme Court upheld the mutilation by ruling that for the most part the determination of punishment is the right of the state.

Local issues, such as the Kansas Blue Sky law of 1911 and the California Indian Gaming (use to be gambling) laws of 1987, frequently have great influence.

Bakken illustrated the influence of the West on law giving specific and dramatic examples.

AUGUST MEETING

Corral Member Paul Rippens gave a slide presentation on the St. Francis Dam

Photograph by Frank Q. Newton

August Meeting Speaker Paul Rippens

disaster, the second worst tragedy in California (after the 1906 San Francisco earthquake and fire). The dam, which had been built as a storage reservoir for the Los Angeles Aqueduct, collapsed on March 12, 1928, killing some 450 people. The Department of Water and Power's Chief Engineer, William Mulholland, accepted responsibility for the disaster, ending an illustrious and controversial career.

The city had acquired water rights to the Owens River in 1905 and constructed the aqueduct between 1908 and 1913. In the 1920s the growth of Los Angeles created greater demands on the Owens River as a water source. The city's policy of buying out farms and irrigation ditch companies had angered merchants in Bishop who felt the city was ruining the valley's economy. The aqueduct was dynamited numerous times from May 1924 to 1927. Nevertheless, Mulholland had two power plants and the dam built in San Francisquito Canyon. 185 feet high and over 588 feet wide, the dam leaked and cracked while the reservoir was being filled, but Mulholland never believed there was a problem.

Los Angeles accepted responsibility and paid all claims for the disaster. Several investigations were made as to the cause of the dam's failure. In 1995 geologist J. David Rogers argued the dam was located on a site of ancient landslides about which Mulholland could not have known. Leakage

did not cause the failure of the dam. Computer simulations showed the sequence of events in the collapse of the dam. Rippens' slides showed both historic photographs and scenes of the canyon as it appears today.

—Abraham Hoffman

Corral Chips

DAVID WROBEL, Associated Professor at the University of Nevada, Los Vegas, received the first Los Angeles Corral Research Grant at the Huntington Library. Wrobel will spend a month at the Huntington working on "Promised Lands: Boosterism, Reminiscences, and the Creation of the American West."

ABRAHAM HOFFMAN won the Francis M. Wheat (formerly Carl I. Wheat) Award for the best article to appear in the *Southern California Quarterly* during 2000. His article, "Water Famine or Water Needs: Los Angeles and Population Growth, 1896-1905," appeared in the Fall 2000 issue.

BILL WARREN, in addition to helping the Huntington, catalogue its map collection, made a presentation on "Mapping the West" to the Autry Docent Annual Retraining Class. **BILL PASCHONG** gave a gallery training program at the same meeting.

Long time **CM JAMES F. DICKASON** died in late August.

Directory Changes

New Members

George C. Gamboa
1102 Loganrita Ave.
Arcadia, CA 91006-4535

Gordon J. Van De Walter
670 Featherwood Dr.
Diamond Bar, CA 91765-1496

Address Changes

Larry Burgess
email: admin@akspl.org

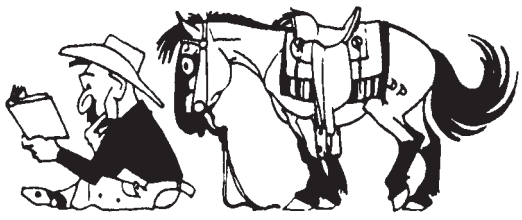
Joe Feeney
P.O. Box 16761
Baton Rouge, LA 70893

William C. Johnston
220 Tacoma Ave S, #104
Tacoma, WA 98402-2508

Joseph F. Ryan
332 N. Mayflower
Monrovia, CA 91016-1506

Bill Shockey
3202 Inlet Bay Ave.
Las Vegas, NV 89031

Richard Thomas
2746 W. Wind Dr.
Eagle, ID 83616



DOWN THE WESTERN BOOK TRAIL . . .

Anyone can make history. Only a great man can write it.

—Oscar Wilde

REBIRTH: *Mexican Los Angeles from the Great Migration to the Great Depression,* by Douglas Monroy. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999. 323 pp. Illustrations, Notes, Bibliography, Index. Cloth, $45; Paper, $17.95. Order from University of California Press, 2120 Berkeley Way, Berkeley, CA 94720, (510) 642-4247.

This book fulfills two very important goals that add immeasurably to our understanding of Mexican American history, tracing the history of Mexican immigration to southern California and the experiences of those immigrants and their children. Monroy's overview encompasses the first third of the 20th century, a time when the economic growth of southern California required an extensive labor force to pick the fruit, maintain railroad and streetcar tracks, and provide largely unskilled labor in factories and fields. Employers considered Mexicans a valuable commodity, but also a necessary evil. Believing in their own stereotypes of Mexicans, agriculturalists and industrialists not only claimed Mexican immigrants were unassimilable, they effectively prevented their economic advancement through segregated schools and limited educational opportunities, as well as denying them access to skilled occupations. When the Great Depression struck, public officials tried to solve unemployment problems by deportation, repatriation, and creation of a climate so hostile to Mexicans they would want to leave of their own volition.

Much of this has been told before, and Monroy acknowledges his debts to Lawrence Cardoso, Vicki Ruiz, Francisco Baldarrama, and other scholars. But he also puts the pieces together in an original and powerful synthesis telling an "old story" in a new way. He accomplishes the second goal of relating the immigrant experience, of *Mexico de Afuera,* from the viewpoint of the immigrants themselves. Describing the exploitation of Mexicans tells only part of the story. Monroy graphically recaptures the hopes and ambitions of the exploited, the tensions between tradition-oriented parents and children raised in the United States. Settlement houses, schools and evangelical Protestant churches may have had their influence, but so did the movies, a point Monroy makes in an outstanding chapter on parent- children relations. He also effectively ends any lingering doubts about Mexican political activism, assessing the role of Mexicans as leaders in numerous strikes for better wages and working conditions.

Although Monroy commands authority through his depth of research and expertise on his topic, it is frustrating to find careless errors when he looks at broader perspectives. Fact-checking seems to have become a lost art. Consider Theodore Roosevelt capturing "Puerto Rico from the Spanish, adding it to the United States" (p. 9). Pages 71-72 offer an outdated interpretation of the Owens Valley-Los Angeles water controversy, with no evidence (or mention in the bibliography or notes) of Robert A. Sauter, John Walton, William Kahrl or other scholars who would certainly have tempered Monroy's exaggerations and distortions that he took from Carey McWilliams and Morrow Mayo in books written half a century and more ago. The Alamo Canal, connected to the Alamo River, doesn't invite comparison (p. 73) to "Remember the Alamo"—it's named for the trees in the area. Francisco Villa entered Mexico City in the summer of 1914 and raided Columbus, New Mexico, in March 1916, but Monroy turns these events around (p. 85). Harrison Gray Otis could

hardly have been the "acknowledged leader of the city's employer class through the 1920s" (p. 115) since he died in 1917. Nathanael West and Raymond Chandler wrote about 1930s Depression Los Angeles, not 1920s boom times (p. 124).

Weighed in the balance, what Monroy offers in his chosen field is of greater importance than nit-picking lists of factual errors. Still, a good book could have been a better one had the University of California Press given a more careful editing of the manuscript before committing it to print. The book merits a revised edition, and perhaps Monroy and UC Press will comb out the errors.

—Abraham Hoffman

ONE EYE CLOSED, THE OTHER RED: *The California Bootlegging Years* by Clifford James Walker. Barstow: Back Door Publishing, 1999. 667 Pages, Photos, Maps, Bibliography, Index. $25 Hardcover; $18 Softcover. Order from Back Door Publishing, 1204 Gen Court, Barstow, CA 92311, (760) 256-5570.

The Prohibition Era officially began in 1919 with the ratification of the 18th Amendment enforced by the Volstead Act. So commenced a colorful and storied time of bootleg liquor, homemade "moonshine", speakeasies, rum runners and federal agents chasing them. All through the roaring twenties and early thirties prohibition was the maligned and frequently ineffective law of the land. Not until the election of Franklin D. Roosevelt and a Democratic Congress was the 18th Amendment repealed in 1933.

A fair amount has been written about prohibition in the eastern cities, particularly New York and Chicago, but very little has appeared regarding moonshiners, bootleggers and speakeasies in California. Clifford Walker has remedied this in his latest book, an exhaustive and thoroughly researched account of the efforts to circumvent the Volstead Act in the Golden State.

Walker, whose grandfather was a moonshiner in the 1920s, spent the better part of twenty years researching the topic. He traveled the length and breadth of California, interviewing more than a hundred former moonshiners, bootleggers and their descendants. He has scoured local, state and national archives, museums, historical society collections and newspaper files. He has covered the prohibition era in California so well that no other scholar or writer needs to repeat the research. If ever a work is definitive, this is.

A major attribute of Walker's book is that he lets the bootleggers tell their own stories. He includes the accounts of dozens of men who produced and sold illicit liquor, scores of wives, sons, and daughters, and many lawmen who tried, often futilely, to halt the manufacture and distribution of moonshine. These hundreds of first-hand accounts give the reader a real feel for this bygone era. The author claims that he did not intend to write a history book per se, but there is a great amount of history within these pages. He has captured in rich detail one of California's most exciting sagas, covering the "Roaring Twenties" and the beginning of the Great Depression.

One Eye Closed, the Other Red will fascinate the reader. It belongs on the bookshelf of all collectors of Californiana.

—John Robinson

CHAVEZ RAVINE, 1949: *A Los Angeles Story*, by Don Normark. San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1999. 143 pp. Illustrations, Index. Cloth, $29.95. Order from Chronicle Books, 85 Second Avenue, Sixth Floor, San Francisco, CA 94105, (415) 537-4257.

> *One clear day in November 1948 I was looking for a high point to get a postcard view of Los Angeles, I didn't find that view, but when I looked over the other side of that hill I was standing on, I saw a village I never knew was there. Hiking down into it, I began to think I had found a poor man's Shangri-La.*

Thus begins an extraordinary new book. Don Normark was the young photographer

who found himself in an isolated barrio, smack in the center of Los Angeles—dirt streets, haphazard houses, little indoor plumbing, and one streetlight for several hundred homes. He spent the next months roaming those streets taking photographs of the people and their environment. In what was then a different world, he found himself accepted. These early photographs showcase skills Don Normark would later refine, leading to worldwide recognition of his work.

While Don was framing this photo-essay, he was unaware that Chavez Ravine had already been slated for "urban renewal." It would be another year before residents received formal notice to leave so public housing could be constructed in the ravine. Many houses were quickly sold to the authorities and torn down. Some residents lived on amidst growing desolation until 1959. The community was finally buried as the ravine was filled. Dodger Stadium rose on that fill, the public housing dream having evaporated.

We move ahead almost 50 years in time. Don Normark, a successful photographic career behind him, returns to Los Angeles. He finds some of the former neighbors still attending the local church. A larger group have a yearly gathering in Elysian Park. Tape recorder in hand, he visits some of his old acquaintances. Opening a window to the past, he spreads half century old photos on their dining room tables.

The parents and older folks alive in 1949 are gone. These are the grown children who view the pictures with wondrous and sometimes tear-filled eyes. One of the blessings of the human mind is that it remembers the good times. The grinding poverty, the dusty streets, the lopsided outhouses, all fall away and memories are of dancing in the street under the single streetlamp, jury-rigged to power a jukebox. The faces of the viewers have grown lined but they remember the young men in tee shirts leaning on teetering wooden balconies as though it were yesterday. And that yesterday was good. Everyone was poor together. Magical memories of youth take over.

Nearly all of the text is direct quotation of good memories, the survival technique of poor people who had no idea there was more than they had and really didn't care. Faces from the past are lit with happiness. A brilliantly white confirmation dress stands out against the drab unpainted wood of a shack called "home." A boy, now in his sixties, remembers a photo of himself polishing his shoes before church.

This is a book to sit with in a warm and quiet corner and reflect on how we differ and yet are all the same. You may find it brings back memories of a time when people cared more for each other than themselves.

—Bill Warren

MEXICAN CONSULS AND LABOR ORGANIZING: *Imperial Politics in the American Southwest,* by Gilbert Gonzalez. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1999. 277 pp. Illustrations, Notes, Bibliography, Index. Cloth, $40; paper, $19.95. Order from University of Texas Press, P.O. Box 7819, Austin, TX 78713-7819, (800) 252-3206.

Gilbert Gonzalez concludes that the number one problem for Mexicans in the United States is the government of Mexico. Traditionally corrupt, historically Janus-faced, chronically guilty of double speak and in league with American capitalists to manipulate the Mexican proletariat, the government of Mexico used Mexican consuls to suppress the interests of Mexican workers, undercut labor unions and support the interests of American growers, shippers and industrialists.

Gonzalez documents this conspiracy in the Los Angeles County, San Joaquin Valley and Imperial Valley strikes of 1933-34. Mexican consuls speak of supporting workers, but act in the interests of the growers and shippers. The Bracero Agreements that follow in the 1940s continues the exploitation. Things get worse as time goes on and NAFTA simply deepens the canyon between rich and poor in Mexico. Mexico's most important export continues to be surplus people.

In this angry book about Mexico, one wonders why Mexico failed or refused to stop producing surplus population. Was that a conspiracy of the church and capitalists? Further, where is Caesar Chavez? He is not in the text and not in the index. With all the power wielded by Mexico through the consuls, how could any farmworker union be successful? This book does raise all sorts of interesting questions in the process of carefully documenting the fact that Mexican consuls followed the public policy of Mexico rather than the economic and social interests of Mexican laborers in America.

—Gordon Morris Bakken

LOOKING WEST, by John D. Dorst. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999. 240 pp. Illustrations, Notes, Works Cited, Index. Cloth, $45; paper, $19.95. Order from University of Pennsylvania Press, Warehouse, P.O. Box 4836, Hampden Station, Baltimore, MD 21211, (800) 445-9880.

If you are looking for a conventional history of the west or even a western story of the rugged men and the equally rugged environment in which they lived, traveled across country and left their mark, then *Looking West* by John D. Dorst is not the book for you. *Looking West* is a book about the west but it is written with an emphasis on cultural studies. The material found might loosely be characterized as folkloric. Dorst looks at the west through his eyes, the eyes of a folklorist. He looks at real locations, photographs, and traditional narratives and points out the fallacies of their imagery.

Dorst gives plenty of examples of how our modern consumer culture has defined much of what we believe about the west. Dorst uses, quite frequently, small things as parables for large issues. He analyzes parts of Owen Wister's *Virginian*. He discusses Buffalo Bill Cody and Sitting Bull in an 1885 promotional photo. He speculates on the background lighting, the Indian's full ceremonial regalia and Cody's stance in the picture. To analyze this further is certainly not a necessity.

Folk art, such as Edna and Floyd Young's welded open-work fence, is also a statement about the west. The fence consists of a varied array of collected artifacts—tools, utensils, and specialized occupational gear—many of the items associated with the history of western settlement and industrialization. A picture of the fence and subsequent pictures of Jake Dello's yard say it much better than this review. The visual imagery, the abstract expressions and the symbolism that these objects represent is analyzed to the ultima Thule.

From prison cells to the Devils Tower, Dorst analyzes the deck of Western visual culture. The book provokes some interest in the many scattered examples used by the author, but the readings were at times tedious and appeal solely to those whose interests are defined by imagery and ethnographic observation.

—Gary D. Turner

THE CONQUEST OF THE KARANKAWAS AND THE TONKAWAS, 1821-1859, by Kelly F. Himmel. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1999. 192 pp. Appendixes, Notes, Bibliography, Index. Cloth, $32.95. Order from Texas A&M University Press, College Station TX 77843-4354, (800) 826-8911.

Kelly Himmel has written an account of the demise of two Texas Native American tribes. For centuries, the Karankawas occupied the coast of Texas near Galveston Island. They hunted along the coast in winter and in the southern Plains in summer. The Tonkawas lived in central Texas and were considered one of the Southern Plains tribes. In the short period of 1821 to 1859, both of these tribes were virtually wiped out; they ceased to exist as physical or cultural identities. Once thriving communities, the Karankawas survived only as scattered individuals after the last small remaining remnant was massacred on the banks of the Rio

Grande, and the few remaining Tankawas were pushed across the Red River into Indian Territory.

Kelly F. Himmel is an assistant professor and graduate advisor in the Department of Sociology, University of Texas-Pan American. He holds a Ph.D. from the University of Texas at Austin. He has written a detailed and scholarly account of the destruction of these people. He covers not only the individuals involved, but also the geopolitical and economic factors as well. During this 38-year period, the peoples and governments of Spain, Mexico, Texas and the United States, and several other Native American tribes were involved in the process.

If you are not intimately acquainted with Texas geography, you will need a good map of Texas. Professor Himmel describes the movements and location of various events in relation to the rivers in Texas. To understand and follow the narrative, I found myself constantly referring to the map.

Himmel's short book offers a vivid description of this period of Texas history. If you are interested in the history of Texas and the history of the Indians of the southern Plains, you'll find this book a useful addition to your library.

—Dave Gillies

ENDURING COWBOYS: *Life in the New Mexico Saddle,* edited by Arnold Vigil. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1999. 151 pp. Illustrations. Cloth, $38.95. Order from University of New Mexico Press. 3721 Spirit Drive S.E., Albuquerque, NM 87106-5631, (800) 249-7737, Fax (800) 622-8667, email custserv@upress.umn.edu.

Names like Bob Lee, Art Evans, Jenny Vance, Ross Begay Sr., all have a very common linkage and heritage. They're all cowboys and cowgirls working the "staked plains" of New Mexico.

When the Spanish first brought the horse to the northern frontier of New Spain it changed the life of its inhabitants and established a Spanish-influenced cowboy culture that still survives today.

New Mexico Magazine under the editorship of Arnold Vigil in their book, *Enduring Cowboys*, captured a remarkable history and documentation of present day cowboys and cowgirls through biographical sketches and essays.

In Mr. Vigil's introduction he claims that the cowboy profession is getting harder with each passing day. What's making it tougher is that the entire ranching institution is under fire from many fronts: the environmentalists, declining price of beef, foreign competition, reduced government subsidies, and the cost of doing business, that is, the rising costs of stock, horses, tack, feed and land. Finally he wonders what makes anyone want to be a cowboy. From this introduction through the last page of the book, one gains a positive image and appreciate for the fascination of cowboying.

The essay, "Bowlegs" by John L. Sinclair first appeared as a feature article in *New Mexico Magazine* in September 1938, but if the reader was unaware of this earlier date, one would think it was a thoughtful portrayal of cowboys in the year 2000. The final essay in the book, "The Techno Cowboy" is not the romantic legendary cowboy that usually comes to mind, but the hard working guy out there doing a tough job and using all of the contemporary communication and working tools familiar in many of our more readily identified professions.

For anyone interested in Native American history, the essay, "Cowboys as Indians" relates how the idea of raising cattle as an economic endeavor didn't occur in the tribes until the late 1800's and how they've practiced ranching ever since.

Enduring Cowboys is beautifully illustrated with dramatic color photos and black and white portraits of each of the cowboys and cowgirls featured. Archival pictures illustrate the essay, "The Legendary Cowboy." The book is well written and enlightening in its explaining the phenomena of the modern day cowboy.

—Joe Lesser

PICTURING CALIFORNIA'S OTHER LANDSCAPE: *The Great Central Valley*, edited by Heath Schenker. Berkeley: Heyday Books, 1999. 200 pp. Maps, Illustrations. Paper, $35. Order from Heyday Books, P. O. Box 9145, Berkeley, CA 94709, (510) 549-3564.

As part of California's 1999 sesquicentennial celebration, the Haggin Museum in Stockton mounted an exhibition of the art and history of California's Central Valley. Heath Schenker, Assoc. Professor of Landscape Architecture at UC Davis, had suggested this exhibit. She invited colleagues from several California Universities to write commentaries on aspects of the exhibition, culminating in this book. The texts are short; it is the illustrations that provide a vivid and varied view of the heartland of our Golden State.

Normally I detest books printed wider than they are tall. They don't fit, seeming to stick out of the bookshelf shouting, "Here I am!" In this case, I'll make an exception. The subject matter, the vast horizon and seemingly endless fields of crops framed by majestic Sierras, led artists to select broad canvases. Perhaps the extreme example is Michael Tompkins *Along Highway 5,* which graces the book's cover. The original painting measures 5-3/4 by 32 inches, and anyone who has driven that road at sunrise will instantly recognize the stark beauty of this panorama. More than 40 artists offer their own versions of life on this endless plain, many accompanied by their own commentaries.

The section on maps is, alas, much too short. Yet it contains a wonderful copy of Frémont's *Map of the Exploring Expedition...,* reproduced from the State Library copy, printed in landscape format large enough to actually read some of the legends. Another charmer is a map of beautiful downtown 1889 Bakersfield with illustrations of a horse drawn wagon on a cool shaded street and a 17 month old peach tree already twelve feet tall.

Examples of early photography include an 1888 artesian well, promising crops aplenty. Contrasting is a shot of the spectacular *Lake View Gusher,* 1910. Probably not as pretty, unless it was your property being submerged in that growing pool of crude oil. Ansel Adams' *Farm in the Rice Fields* aerial photo is accompanied by his rather bleak assessment, "I have returned from 1,000 miles of haze, smog, general dullness and three pictures of the Central Valley. Might be rich but it ain't attractive. I got turkeys, Lake Tahoe, rice and a squeaky fan belt." Ah, but Ansel, you forgot the Central Valley is Yosemite's doorstep. Many photographers found interest and beauty in the valley's open spaces.

The final section covers commercial and promotional images and serves as a lovely dessert. Exquisite lithographic birds-eye views produced at the turn of the 19th Century show valley cities as bustling hubs of commerce. The water route from Suisun Bay to Sacramento was characterized as the "Netherlands Route" in Southern Pacific Railroad ads of 1912, complete with Dutch girls bearing tulips. Fruit box labels provided the ultimate illustration of the overflowing riches of this region, with the glowing sun setting majestically behind verdant orchards.

This work beautifully summarizes an often-overlooked portion of our state. Anyone who has lived in the Central Valley will find himself immersed in familiar images. Not to contradict Ansel Adams but "attractive" can be found in the heart as well as the eye of the beholder.

—Bill Warren

AND OTHER THINGS

FIDDLIN' JOHNNY: *Cowboy Legacy.* CD, $14.98 + S. & H.. Order from Makoche Recording Company, 208 No. 4th St., P.O. Box 2756, Bismarck, ND, 58502-2756, (800) 637-6863, e-mail: makoche@aol.com

Johnny Lardinois, his brother, sister, and father play remarkably well together. Each note is perfect and smooth. Their selection of old-time fiddle tunes is great. The liner notes are informative and well written; the accom-

panying photographs add to the overall package. However, the album becomes boring about half way through. It is the first western "elevator music" that I have ever heard. Considering that Johnny was only 17, and his siblings 15 and 13, the lack of variety, spontaneity, and fun is not too surprising. An occasional instrumental solo might have helped. Give this group a few years and—watch out.

—Jai Belcher

BOOTS AND SADDLES; *or Life in Dakota with General Custer,* by Elizabeth Bacon Custer. Audio book, Read by Pat Gutenshon Ness, running time 3 1/2 hours. Cassette $14.98 + S & H. Order from Scoria, 208 No. 4th Street, P.O. Box 2756, Bismarck, ND 58502-2756, (800) 286-9003. E-mail: makoche@aol.com

The audio book, *Boots and Saddles,* is very worthwhile. It is for the person with little time or who wants a quick overview of the subject. This audio book does not cover the whole book. Three chapters are missing, all on Indians, as well as other parts of the book. The tape will still give you an important and useful view of General Custer and his wife Elizabeth, as well as life on the frontier, and Army life as seen through her eyes.

Libbie Custer gives a different view of her controversial husband, General Custer, as she calls him throughout. Custer is a man who is often viewed in a very unsympathetic light. She speaks of his love for animals, his horses, Vic and Dandy. Libbie praises his outstanding ability as a horseman. She says, "Domestic care sat very lightly on me. Nothing seemed to annoy my husband more than to find me in the kitchen." Libbie said that her husband felt her life was so hard and rough that "he knew it taxed me to the utmost, and I never forgot to be grateful that I was spared domestic care in garrison." Whereas her husband was unfailingly thoughtful of her, Army Regulations were not. She states, "lt seemed very strange to me that with all the value that is set on the presence of the woman in an officer's family at the frontier post, the Book of Army Regulations makes no provisions for them, but in fact ignores them entirely!" Since the book goes into detail on how to cook bean soup; it would "be natural to suppose that a paragraph or two might be wasted on an officer's wife!"

There are three chapters mainly about Indians that were not in the audio book. Libbie found Indians fearful and barbaric, at the same time interesting. At one point she mentions an invitation to observe a strong heart dance by the Rees which was accepted for the variety it would give their lives. As she stated, "Indian life is still a novelty to us." She injects into her writings the feeling that the Indians were tolerated because it was necessary.

We must keep in mind the ethics of the day. Libbie could have been tortured or killed by the Indians if she had been captured; or she could have been killed by her own to save her from "a fate worse than death" if capture were imminent. No doubt fear for her life and unspeakable terror colored her feelings about Indians. These feelings understandably made her want to avoid them. By the time this book was written, her husband and four other members of her family had died at Little Big Horn. We have very different views today. We must consider the feelings of the Native Americans who might listen to this tape. We must also keep Libbie within the context of the 19th century; something we of the 20th-21st centuries have a hard time doing.

The tape is read by Pat Ness. Although Ms. Ness reads the work well, this reviewer finds her voice unacceptable. Her voice is light and airy; one can only hope Libbie did not sound like this.

In closing, I want to say that there is nothing like reading the book. Listening to tapes is a nice, easy substitute, but the actual book is the only way to really get to know your subject.

—Kendel Cody Cornwell